

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please delete the first heading under the title in its entirety on page 1.

Please delete the second heading on page 1 in its entirety and replace with the following new heading:

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

Please delete the third heading on page 1 in its entirety and replace with the following new heading:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Please replace the second paragraph on page 1 with the following amended paragraph:

In conventional hand pallet trucks, ~~the~~ a pole is used to steer and move the vehicle, as well as to pump for lifting a load. To operate the lifting apparatus, especially to lower the load, an operating element is required which should be easily accessible, and allow switching between the functions of lifting and driving as well as sensitive lowering of the load.

Please replace the third paragraph on page 1 with the following amended paragraph:

Easy accessibility of the operating element is especially important for effective operation of the hand pallet truck when pulling the vehicle, i.e. when the pole is an inclined position in front of the vehicle. By contrast, actuating the functions with an upright pole, i.e. when the vehicle is being pushed, is less important, because in most cases the vehicle is drawn out of the pallet, thereby returning the pole into the inclined position.

Please replace the fourth paragraph on page 1 with the following amended paragraph:

For pumping and moving the vehicle, it is ~~of advantage~~ advantageous if the pole handle is centrally grippable in order to avoid unnecessary steering as well as frictional forces. As the same time, the actuating forces at the operating element should be as small as possible in all situations requiring a longer actuating path, which might be realized by providing a longer distance between the circle point and the lever pivot point, for example.

Please replace the fifth paragraph on page 1 with the following amended paragraph:

It is known to use an extension of the pole bar traversing the handle as a mounting component for an operating lever extending to the sides. This known pole handle has the drawback that it cannot be gripped centrally. From DE 297 10 503 U₁, it is further known to pivotally mount a control lever as the upper end of the portion of the bar extending into the handle. The lever must be pushed away from the operator to achieve a lowering of the load. Pulling the lever towards the operator will result in a switch to the lifting function. A drawback of this design is that the operator cannot actuate the functions well while pulling the vehicle because the control lever has to be pulled upwards to achieve a lowering action. Further, since the operating element is not familiar from other technical devices, it is less suitable for intuitive operation. The actuating forces are great due to the small distance between the circle point and the lever pivot point.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 2 with the following amended paragraph:

Apart from the above described possibility of operating a hand pallet truck, it is also common to provide it with an integrated handbrake. In this context, it is known from EP 1 186 511 A2 to pivotally mount an operating lever on either side of a holding extension traversing the handle of the pole in prolongation of the pole. One operating lever is connected to a traction or pushing element for the lifting apparatus and the other one with a traction or pressure element for a brake. Actuation of the lifting apparatus is effected such that pulling of the operating lever initiates a lowering operation in the lifting apparatus while ~~a push~~ pushing the lever opens up the possibility

to effect a lifting operation by pumping on the pole. Pushing the other operating lever leads to braking of the vehicle wherein the extent of the pivotal movement determines the braking power. This known arrangement further provides for a locking/unlocking lever which is also pivotally mounted on the holding extension and has a projection cooperating with a recess of the brake operating lever when the brake operating lever has reached a given hind position. Thus, a parking brake is created which is released by pivoting the locking and unlocking lever in the opposite direction. Thereby the brake operation lever may return to its initial position by means of spring bias from the direction of the brake. Finally, the known arrangement also provides that the parking brake is released by actuating the other operating lever. In other words, when actuating the lowering operation, the parking brake is automatically released.

Please replace the eight paragraph on page 5 with the following amended paragraph:

Fig. 1 shows a bar 10 of a pole generally indicated at 12. Only the section 10 and a loop-shaped handle 14 of the pole are fully shown. The other end of the pole bar 10 is connected or linked to the pillow block 15 (partially shown) of a steered wheel of a hand pallet truck (not shown) for the purpose of manipulating the hand pallet truck accordingly. As usual, the hand pallet truck includes a pump for lifting the load carrying means and a valve arrangement for lowering the load carrying means.

Please replace the ninth paragraph on page 5 with the following amended paragraph:

As usual, the handle 14 is formed by a suitably curved tube defining a plane in ~~which is also disposed~~ the axis of the bar 10 is also disposed. The bar 10 projects into the interior of the handle 14, thereby forming a holding extension 16. This holding extension comprises a tube section 18 and a housing 20 which have been mounted and fastened on the tube section 18. Details about this process will be described below.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 6 with the following amended paragraph:

In the housing 20, two operating levers 22, 24 are pivotally mounted for actuation of the lifting and lowering functions of the hand pallet truck (not shown). Details of these levers 22, 24 and their mountings are apparent from the further figures.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 6 with the following amended paragraph:

As shown by the arrows 26, 28, the levers 22, 24 may be pivoted in both directions in a plane coinciding with or parallel to the plane of the handle 14. Attention is drawn to the fact that the distance between the housing 20 or the extension 16 and the rear portion 30 of the handle 14 is such that the rear portion 30 of the handle 14 may be gripped by hand in any position.

Please replace the third paragraph on page 6 with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in Fig. 2, the housing 20 consists of an upper shell 32 and a lower shell 34, the dividing plane 36 of the two shells 32, 34 being disposed in the central plane of the handle 14. The left part of the housing 20 is formed by a socket portion 19 receiving the tube section 18 in order to attach the housing 20.

Please replace the fourth paragraph on page 6 with the following amended paragraph:

As is apparent from Fig. 3 and the following figures, the two operating levers 22, 24 have the same slight S-form. The curved actuating portions 38, 40 of the operating levers 22, 24 each project through side slots 42, 44 in the housing 20 towards the outside. The curvature of portions 38, [[30]] 40 is such that the convex sides face the operator and the concave sides face the pole bar 10, as is readily apparent from the drawings. The inner portions [[36]] 46, 48 of the operating levers 22, 24 are curved in opposite directions and are pivotally mounted at pivot points 50, 52 in the housing 20, respectively. Mounting is effected, for example, by means of a bearing journal extending through a hole in either inner portion 46, 48. The holes are disposed nearly at the end of inner portions 46, 48.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 7 with the following amended paragraph:

The operating levers 22, 24 shown in Fig. 3 in the neutral position may be pivoted upwards, as well as downwards in Fig. 3. A stop to the pivotal movement is provided but not shown in detail.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 7 with the following amended paragraph:

As is apparent from Fig. 3 and the further figures, each lever inner portion 46, 48 of the operating levers 22, 24 has a toothed portion having two teeth 54, 56. The toothed portions of the two lever portion lever portion inner portions 46, 48 cooperate with a toothed rack 58 attached to a shifting element 60 which is mounted such that it is linearly movable in the axis of pole bar 10 in the housing 20, therein providing a coupling mechanism 61. The toothed rack portion 58 includes two teeth 62, 64 on each of its opposing sides, which cooperate with the corresponding teeth 54, 56 of lever inner portions 46, 48, of the operating levers 22, 24, respectively.

Please replace the third paragraph on page 7 with the following amended paragraph:

A traction rope 66 is attached to the opposite end of the shifting element 60 and is therefore connected to the coupling mechanism 61, the traction rope being in turn connected to corresponding control devices (not shown) provided in the hand pallet truck.

Please replace the fifth paragraph on page 7 with the following amended paragraph:

If a lever is pivoted in the direction of arrow 24, i.e. towards the operator or handle rear portion 30, as shown in Fig. 4, the toothed rack portion 58 will be displaced by tooth 56 in the direction of the operator. This causes traction rope 66 to perform a traction movement, the displacement being indicated by the distance d between the broken and full lines in Fig. 4. The broken line indicates the neutral position as shown in Fig. 3. It is apparent that the same operation is achieved when both operating levers 22, 24 are pulled. If one lever is pulled further than the other, the displacement of the lever pulled furthest is decisive. The extent of deflection of the traction element rope 66 determines the lowering speed of the load carrying means of the hand pallet truck (not shown).

Please replace the first paragraph on page 8 with the following amended paragraph:

The operating lever 22 remains in its neutral position when the operating lever 24 is being pivoted for the purpose of triggering a lowering function. With respect to the lowering function, the operating levers 22, 24 are independent.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 8 with the following amended paragraph:

If a lever 22 or 24 is being pushed, i.e., pivoted away from the operating person, the shifting element 60 will be pushed in the same direction. This pushing initiates a lifting function. The displacement of traction rope 66 relative to the neutral position is indicated at d'. New lifting Lifting of the load carrying means may now be effected by "pumping" ~~with~~ using the pole bar 10.

Please replace the fifth paragraph on page 8 with the following amended paragraph:

However, if one operating lever 24 is being pulled, pushing the operating lever 22 is not possible because this lever 22 will be blocked by lever 24 through an interlocking of teeth.

Please replace the sixth paragraph on page 8 with the following amended paragraph:

As far as the same parts as in Fig. 3 are shown in Fig. 4, the same reference signs are used. It is apparent that, with respect to Fig. 3, the second operating lever 22 has been removed and in its place an operating lever 70 including an actuating portion 72 and an inner portion 74 has been provided. The inner portion 74 is pivotally mounted at the same mounting place 50 where, in the embodiment of Fig. 3, the operating lever 22 was pivotally mounted. The housing 20 is arranged such that the operating lever 22 may easily be replaced by the operating lever 70 and ~~the other way round vice versa~~. The actuating portion 72 may have the same geometry as the actuating portion 38 of Fig. 3, alternatively it may be shaped differently or have a different surface or ~~color~~ color so that the operator may distinguish between operating levers 24 and 70 with respect to their function.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 9 with the following amended paragraph:

As further shown in Fig. 4, inner portions 48 and 74 of levers 24, 70, respectively, extend through the displacement shifting element 60 in order to cross there. Only the lower part of the displacement shifting element 60 may be seen in Fig. 3. This has no bearing on the function, excepting the fact other than that the operating levers 24, 70 also cross there in order to be able to achieve a great lever force.

Please replace the third paragraph on page 9 with the following amended paragraph:

The third lever acting as locking and unlocking lever 80 is pivotally mounted at 82 on operating lever 70. For this purpose, lever 70 is reduced in thickness in the mounting area, so that the locking and unlocking lever 80 may also project through the slot 42 of housing 20. A spring 84 urges or biases the lever 80 in anticlockwise a counterclockwise direction. The other end of the spring 84 is fixed at lever 70.

Please replace the fourth paragraph on page 9 with the following amended paragraph:

Inside the housing 20 is disposed a plate-shaped interlock portion 85 is disposed, the portion having a saw tooth arrangement 88. If This portion 86 may be removable in case the event a brake actuation is not desired.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 10 with the following amended paragraph:

On A catch 92 is mounted on the same shaft as the locking and unlocking lever 80 ~~is mounted a catch 92~~ on lever 70. The A pivot point is indicated at 94. Due to the bias of the locking and unlocking lever 80, the catch 92 is always pivoted against tooth 88, so when pulling at operating lever 70, the catch 92 ratchets along the tooth 88 and lockingly engages the tooth space to which the catch 92 is aligned at the moment when the pivotal movement of lever 70 is ended. Thereby the The operating lever 70 may therefore be locked in several positions to keep the braking force constant at the set value. The operator may unlock the lock by actuating the

locking and unlocking lever 80 and pivoting it in clockwise direction in Fig. 5. This causes the catch 92 to pivot in ~~anticlockwise~~ the counterclockwise direction and disengage with the toothing 88. The spring of the brake may return the operating lever 70 to its original position.

Please replace the second paragraph on page 10 with the following amended paragraph:

In the housing 20, appropriate stops to limit the displacement of the operating levers may be provided.